

Luangpor Teean Whom I Never Met, Yet Get To Know.

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We learned since our elementary school days that the Heart of Buddhism can be summarized into: 1. *Avoid doing bad deed*, 2. *Do good deed*, 3. *Purify one's mind*, as appeared in the *Ovadapatimokkha Sutra* (the discourse summarizing the Buddha's teachings). I have always assumed that the third teaching on purifying one's mind is the most important aspect which makes Buddhism unique and different from other religions, capable of freeing people from suffering. Yet, I did not understand what exactly was meant by purifying one's mind. Many years passed by before I finally realized that it basically equates to practicing *Insight Meditation* to gain Intuitive Wisdom, so one would see things in reality as they truly are (gaining Insight). One's mind would be free from all suffering and personal internal conflict, and one would become peaceful and perfectly happy.

When I was 21 years old, I began to understand the meaning of '*Meditation*' when an elderly person told her friend of the same age that, "Without '*Bud-dho*,' I couldn't have made it to the peak of this 'Phukradueng Mountain' for sure." I was very curious of what was this word, '*Bud-dho*,' they were referring to. Shortly afterwards, I found the answer during the following month while I was ordained as a Buddhist monk, at *Wat Bovornives Vihara Temple*, by *His Holiness Somdej Phra Nyanasamvara (Venerable Suvaddhano Bhikkhu)*, the current Supreme Patriarch, as my preceptor. I had the opportunity to be trained in the *Anapanasati, the Mindfulness with Breathing*, at the Temple, as well as, at the *Ban Tad Forest Monastery (Wat Pa Ban Tad)*, Udonthani, Thailand, under the guidance of *Venerable Ajahn Phramaha Boowa Nyanasampunno (Luangta Boowa)*, using the method of breath observation along with mental reciting of the word, '*Bud-dho*' (that I was curious to know). It confirmed my confidence in *Vipassana or Insight Meditation* that it is the key towards the end of suffering, which can be provable to oneself.

In fact, *Vipassana or Insight Meditation*, is basically the method of training the mind to see one's own mind clearly, honestly, and truthfully, and to see it's own true nature. It trains one to be perfectly mindful, and see the arising and passing away of *Name (Nama) or Mind and Form (Rupa) or Body*, especially the mind, namely *Nama-Rupa*, or the arising and passing away of thoughts derived from the informations perceived through the six sense-organs: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Name and Form are the basis of concepts and supposition, leading one to cling to and resulting in suffering. Every person consists of body and mind, but full of 'Self' or 'Ego' (*Atta*) or blinded by delusion (*Moha*). It prevents the mind to see one's own true mind and mental phenomena as they truly are. Therefore, what one does, says, and thinks would tend to be befitting with one's own desire or against what one rejects. All the time, one would seek, and eagerly acquire those with positive conceptual or suppositional values suitable to one's desire, or push aside, expel, and destroy those with negative conceptual or suppositional values unsuitable to oneself, resulting in endless chaos and suffering within oneself. Therefore, one is taught to observe one's own body and mind, so one would see the origin of one's own continuously arising and ceasing thoughts, which form the root of the overwhelming influence on one's mind, stemming from greed, hatred, and delusion, resulting in endless suffering. The goal of *Vipassana or Insight Meditation* is to catch the thought, seeing the thought as it arises at all time, so one would not be blinded and fooled by one's own passion. One would realize *the true and absolute nature of one's mind that it is pure, clear, and luminous, always carrying within it the Buddha Nature, but being tainted by greed, hatred, and delusion. Buddha Nature is at one's mind. Mind is Buddha Nature. Mind is Dharma, and the Ultimate Truth. Dharma and the Ultimate Truth is the Mind, at one's mind.*

Venerable Ajahn Buddhadasa explained that the full discourse of *Anapanasati Sutra* (consisting of 16 detailed steps) has perfectly contained within it *the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipatthana)*, namely, observation of one's own *Body, Feeling, Mind, and Mental Phenomena/Objects/Events (Dharma)*, which form the basis of Insight Meditation. It emphasizes the *observation of any particular phenomenon while being aware of every In-breath and every Out-breath*. And, in this very same Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the Buddha did say that, "*Anyone who can maintain one's Mindfulness continuously like a linking chain, for 7 years for the slowest, 7 months for the medium, and 7 days for the quickest, will gain a great benefit of attaining Enlightenment, becoming an Arahant (a fully enlightened one), or at the very least, an Anagami (a non-returner, who will attain a full enlightenment in another higher realm).*"

I gained more confidence that I did find a great tool for practicing Insight meditation correctly, as the Buddha himself attained his enlightenment through practicing this very same method of *Anapanasati*. It gave me strength to continue my meditation practice through the years, and I did advance accordingly. Yet, due to my occupation and a very tight daily schedule, my only time to practice meditation would usually be very late at night or very early in the morning, depending on the time available. I could concentrate my mind very well and very fast, and fully gain Mindfulness and Self-awareness while I was practicing meditation. In my daily life, I could even chain mindfulness with my breath while working, but due to the subtle nature of the breath, I could not link my mindfulness to the breath very well, beyond my formal sitting meditation, and frequently lost it when being overwhelmed by my daily responsibilities.

One of the meditation masters has made a remark about the meditation practice according to the full 16-steps of the *Anapanasati Sutra* that it is very subtle, and requires a lot of time to practice. It is most suitable for monks who have plenty of time to practice meditation. I could not help feeling sad that it would be very difficult for me to pursue such a practice vigorously, because my daily life as a laity is full of responsibilities, both at home and at work. Even though I had progressed satisfactorily in my practice of *Anapanasati*, I had to agree with his comment that I did not have enough time to pursue such a practice properly according to the full 16-steps of the *Anapanasati Discourse*. At any rate, I was still trying to practice the method by following the hint given by *Venerable Ajahn Buddhadasa* that, "If one does not have enough time, but being experienced in meditation, one may practice a short-cut technique by directly observing one's mind with every In-breath and every Out-breath (*Cittanupassanasatipatthana*)," which is in agreement with the teaching of the *Luangpoo Dool Atulo (Phra Rajvutthajarn)* who taught his students to use *the mind to directly observe one's own mind (i.e., using Mindfulness to observe one's own Mind), to see one's mind clearly, without letting the mind wander around outwardly with the thoughts*.

One of the Dharma Exercises, which was a great puzzle to me, was the story happened during the Buddha's time while he was residing for 25 years in the City of *Savatti (Sarasvati)*, among her 200,000 people. 80% of the people were Buddhists, and 60% of those laypersons were the *Sota* (the stream-enterer), the *Sakadagami* (the once-returner), and the *Anagami* (the non-returner). All of the Buddhists knew how to practice the *Four Foundations of Mindfulness*, including the doves. This phrase really struck me that the secret to the practice of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness should be something very simple, but forgotten, otherwise they would not have left such a Dharma Exercise for us to solve on the issue that even a bird could practice the method. I assume that this is comparable to the way everyone nowadays knows how to drive a car, if properly taught the technique.

In 1990, I happened to read a column appeared in a Thai Dharma journal, mentioning the names of great Insight Meditation masters of Thailand: Venerable Ajahn Buddhadasa and Venerable Luangpor Teean. That was the very first time I heard of Luangpor Teean's name, which was quite a surprise to me, as I considered myself to be in the circle of Buddhism and Dharma practitioners for a good period of time. I just made a promise to myself that one day I would search for and learn more about Luangpor Teean's teaching.

That very same year, I went back to Thailand, which was the time I usually searched for Dharma books to buy. I happened to come across the book, '*Pakati*' (meaning '*The Norm*') of Luangpor Teean, at the 'Praepittaya' Bookstore so I bought a copy to read, and realized that this was Luangpor Teean whom I sought after, and wish to know. Unfortunately, he passed away already, as the book was published commemorating the occasion of his cremation. Yet, his Dharma did not die with him! His practicing method also looked quite peculiar, yet logical and persuasive for anyone to try out. With careful consideration, it appears that *Luangpor Teean's technique is a way to awaken one's Mindfulness through observation of one's own movement*, not contradictory to the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipatthana Sutra*). Besides, *one can also apply the technique to one's daily life*, e.g., while driving in Bangkok which one has to constantly face dangers, and has to always be alert and mindful. I searched for and bought available copies of Luangpor Teean's books that I could find at the time, and brought back a few copies for my friends in St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A.

I was blessed by the courtesy and kindness of Luangpor Teean's students, e.g., Mr. Viruj Rodpothong, the publisher of the book, '*Pakati*.' Later on, he sent me videotapes and cassette tapes of Luangpor Teean's teachings, which were quite helpful to me in practicing the method correctly. I was quite fortunate that during the following year of 1991, Ajahn Kovit Khemananda was invited from Thailand by Venerable Dr. Sunthorn Plamintr, the Abbot of Buddhadharma Meditation Center, Chicago, Illinois, to come to teach meditation at the Center. It gave a wonderful opportunity to coordinate and invite Ajahn Kovit Khemananda to come to teach at Wat Phrasiratanaram, the Buddhist Temple of Greater St. Louis, Missouri. I was then introduced and got acquainted to Luangpor Teean through the kindness and courtesy of Ajahn Kovit Khemananda. During the following years, the Buddhist Temple of Greater St. Louis had the opportunity to invite Venerable Ajahn Thong Abhagaro, the Abbot of Wat Sanamnai, Nonthaburi, Thailand, Venerable Ajahn Da Samakato, the Abbot of Wat Tadkhong, Udonthani, Thailand, and Venerable Luangpor Kamkian Suwanno, the Abbot of Wat Phukaothong, Chaiyapoom, Thailand, as well as Ajahn Dr. Tavivat Puntarigvivut, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand, to come to teach the Rhythmic Dynamic Meditation of Luangpor Teean. It was a golden opportunity to receive the transmission of Luangpor Teean's teaching through his students, and a great chance for me to become more acquainted to Luangpor Teean.

The most surprising thing is that whoever, monks or laities alike, when sincerely practice the Rhythmic Dynamic Meditation technique of Luangpor Teean, will come to understand, see, and witness the fast pace of advancement in their Dharma practice by themselves, especially the 2 highest graduates in Dharma Studies, the 9th Grade Dharma Graduates, namely Venerable Phramaha Lai Kosako (9th Grade Dharma Graduate), the Abbot of Wat Phrasiratanaram, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A. and Venerable PhraSritirawongs (Phramaha Brahma Sappunyo - 9th Grade Dharma Graduate), the Grand Meditation Master, the Director of the Buddhist Sunday School and Vice-Abbot of Wat Dhammaram, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A. Even though both monks have been close friends for many years, they did not know that each had been practicing the Dynamic Meditation technique of Luangpor Teean for quite some time, and each had advanced in their Dharma practice a great deal, beyond what could be quoted from the text they had previously studied to earn the highest degree in Dharma. This phenomenon also applies to another monk, Venerable Phramaha Somchai Baomun (6th Grade Dharma Graduate, M.A.) of Wat Buddhansorn, Fremont, California, U.S.A., who has an open mind and loves to study. He got interested in the Rhythmic Dynamic Meditation technique of Luangpor Teean as soon as he was introduced to it. This led him to try the technique out and witnessed a rapid advancement of his practice in a very short period of time, which sparked the interest of his peers, leading the other monks to try it out themselves. *The most incredible aspect is that all these three monks had never met Luangpor Teean, yet were quite successful in their practice with this technique, and each of them has wholeheartedly accepted Luangpor Teean as their teacher, despite the fact that Luangpor Teean was illiterate.* This points out that *attaining or realizing Dharma or the Truth does not depend on literacy or earning any advanced degree or diploma, because it is the mind language, realizable with the mind, not through supposition or nomenclature.*

To the educators, one may compare the Rhythmic Dynamic Meditation technique of Luangpor Teean to the *Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipatthana)*, as it fits into the category of *Mindful Observation of the Body (Kayanupassanasatipatthana)*, in the form of *Iriyapathabappa*, i.e., being mindful and aware of one's major movements: standing, walking, sitting, and reclining, and *Sampajannabappa*, i.e., being mindful and aware of one's minor movements, e.g., flexing the leg, bending the elbow, swallowing saliva, blinking the eyes, as well as the Rhythmic Dynamic movement of the hands (equivalent to the walking meditation with the hands). Besides, it also falls into the characteristic of the *Mindful Observation of the Feeling (Vedananupassanasatipatthana)* in a sense that whenever one is aware of the movement, basically one is experiencing or sensing a neutral feeling, not happy nor unhappy, but natural, neutral or bare awareness of the norm and the true nature of one's mind. One simply feels or senses with the true mind, the equanimous mind, which forms the root or origin of one's life. One feels with bare attentiveness and pure perception (Savasang-Vedana). When one cultivates more awareness, mindfulness will perform its natural function, that is catching the movement of the mind, i.e., the thought, befitting the characteristic of the *Mindful Observation of the Mind (Cittanupassanasatipatthana)*, letting one see the continuous changes according to the *Three Universal Characteristics of Existence (Tilakkana - namely: Impermanence/Anicca, Imperfection/Dukkha, and Not-self/Anatta)*, and realizing the *Dharma qualities contributing to Enlightenment (Bodhipakkhiyadhamma)*. One would experience the phenomenal changes of the body, and the phenomenal changes of the mind, through the *Mindful Observation of the Dharma (Dhammanupassanasatipatthana)* as the final step. Luangpor Teean emphasized the importance of seeing one's own thought, which basically is the mind and its movement. Happiness and unhappiness both arise within the mind. Since the mind is formless, therefore this makes it extremely difficult to see the mind. Yet, mind still leaves its trace behind for one to track down the mind itself, through *Feeling (Vedana)*, *Perception (Sanna)*, and *Thought formation (Sankhara)*. These are the *Mental Activities (Cetasika)*, comparable to the arms and legs of the mind. In the art of war and military, it is said that the best weapon to combat a nuclear bomb is another nuclear bomb. *Thought is the same way. Mind travels (as thoughts) afar swiftly, faster than the speed of light, and the only thing that can catch up with it is another form of mental activities, Mindfulness (Sati)*, which is a form of perception, pure perception, i.e., perceiving with bare attentiveness or awareness as observed within oneself (but being forgotten or overlooked, as the mind has been busy wandering around outwardly in the thought).

As the Rhythmic Dynamic Meditation technique of Luangpor Teean is being practiced with the eyes open while observing and embedding one's mindfulness in the bodily movement, therefore the mind has to be much alert. Even when the mind become steady and concentrated, there will not be any vision or image to fool or sidetrack oneself. If there would be any mark or sign, it will be in the form of awareness, which is the characteristic of the norm of one's mind, being equanimous, as the origin of one's life and mind. It will awaken the Mind Consciousness, no longer being blinded by external attraction, which was distorting the mind according to the influence of greed, hatred, and delusion. *The open-eye technique is also in harmony with one's daily activities. From the time that one wakes up until one falls asleep, one constantly moves, including breathing, eating, chewing, drinking, talking, working, etc. One can always easily embed mindfulness and awareness into those major movements (i.e., walking, standing, sitting, and reclining) and the minor movements (e.g., blinking, swallowing, breathing, etc.), and even deeper into one's own thoughts. As one has awakened and cultivated more awareness, one would be embedding more mindfulness to the mind, and would at the same time continuously be practicing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness all day long spontaneously and naturally. When one becomes more advanced, one can automatically chain mindfulness to one's mind continuously as a linking chain, giving rise to Intuitive Wisdom as the final result.*

The most important and most valuable aspect of the Rhythmic Dynamic Meditation technique of Luangpor Teean is that this method is very flexible, and suitable to a laity's life. One can apply the method, and embed mindfulness into one's daily life, no matter how busy one is. Whether one is blinking one's eyes, taking a breath, or moving any part of one's body, awareness will catch up, and simply and naturally embed itself into such activities. One would always

maintain an awakened mind, refreshing and not be tired while working, because one is not stressful, but dwells in the norm of one's mind, peaceful and happy. One can continuously develop one's mind with Insight Meditation (even while working) and maintain mindfulness at all time, awakening awareness, giving rise to *Mindfulness Faculty (Satindriya - equivalent to a kitten)*. After the kitten has been fed (nurtured through practicing the Rhythmic Dynamic Meditation), self-awareness will grow stronger, and mature into *Mindfulness Power (Sati-Bala - similar to a grown cat)* can swiftly catch the *thought formation (Sankhara - equivalent to a rat)*, stop and destroy the *Impulsive Moments (Javanacitta)* and the *Thought Process (Vithicitta)*, similar to the rat being killed by the cat and died in shock. Greed, hatred, and delusion can no longer sneak in with the thought. Suffering and personal internal conflicts will fade away or resolve. One would gain Insight, seeing things in reality as they truly are, without any more doubt. Doubt on what one needs to do to keep mindfulness as a linking chain will resolve, as whenever one maintains mindfulness with the movement of any part of one's body, Mind Consciousness will be awakened, alert, and aware. With the very same mindfulness, one will be in touch with one's mind, awakening one's mind, seeing the thought formation [(*Sankhara*) - the root of *Dependent Arising (Paticcasamuppada)*, stemming from *Ignorance (Avijja)*] while the mind is vibrating and the thought is being formed (the rat coming out of the hole), catching the thought which is full of clinging or attachment and delusion (the root of greed, and hatred). One would live with Mindfulness and Wisdom in one's daily life. Even when one is facing problems, one knows how to prevent and solve the problems correctly and perfectly.

In short, when one is aware (Mindful), unawareness (heedless) will fade away, because of its characteristic that mind can only dwell in one theme or phenomenon at any one moment. When awareness is heightened, there will only be pure Intuitive Wisdom (Insight Wisdom), Ignorance (Avijja) will resolve. Therefore, it is said that, "At the end, wisdom will arise." The Buddha also said, "One can get rid of suffering with Wisdom."

Luangpor Teean is to be considered as a great Insight Meditation master of this era. He could expound the truth on the norm of life and the secret of nature, leading one to understand Buddha-Dharma. He showed the Path, and simplified those issues one considered to be quite difficult. He laid down the foundation of the meditation practice with the Rhythmic Dynamic Meditation as a complete formula, which when practiced anyone can realize Dharma through this most direct and shortest path. He pointed that Nirvana can be reached here and now, not Nirvana in the next life after one is dead, which is not the aim of the Buddha who taught everyone to realize Dharma at the present moment. Many people during the Buddha's time attained enlightenment while in audience listening to the Buddha's teaching, or through practicing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, which nowadays has been misconceived as being nonsense or impossible. Luangpor Teean has courageously reiterated and challenged anyone, regardless of age, sex, race, language, dialect, occupation, wealth, literacy or religious belief, to try out the practice and prove it to oneself that such a thing is still possible. He was even kind enough to lay out an applied, simplified, and complete system of the Rhythmic Dynamic Meditation technique, which *many people have tried out diligently and confirmed the fact of its great reward, and all have been astonished by its unbelievable simplicity.* This is in concert with what Luangpor Teean has said that, *"The Buddha did not teach anything difficult or beyond comprehensible, but we made it difficult ourselves."*

Luangpor Teean was full of loving-kindness and compassion. He wanted to help his fellow human beings witness the Ultimate Truth, the truth of life, overcoming suffering at the present moment. Even at the terminal phase of his life, his close followers all confirmed that he was not concerned with his own gravely ailing health and would enthusiastically teach his students who had problems in their meditation practice.

Even I have never met Luangpor Teean, it seems as if I have known him very, very well. I am very grateful to his boundless loving-kindness in showing how one can open up the covered thing. I, hereby, wholeheartedly pay homage to him.

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